# Semiocapitalism

## Links

### Fascist Recognizability

#### The drive towards mutual recognition is the defining characteristic of fascism – organizing difference into collective categories. Origin, identity, and transparency are mandated in order to render the subject identifiable through the illusions of translation and comprehension.

Franco Bifo Berardi, 2009

“Precarious Rhapsody – Semiocapitalism and the pathologies of the post-alpha generation,” Minor Compositions

Fascism is a shapeless word. For a long time I strove to find a concept able to define the different (and contradictory) forms of authoritarianism, of nationalistic or ethnic aggression and so on, but without success. In his article “Il fascismo eterno,” Umberto Eco recognizes that “the characteristics cannot be marshaled into a system, many are mutually contradictory and are typical of other forms of despotism and fanaticism. But it is sufficient for one to be present for a fascist nebula to coagulate.” There follows a list of Ur-fascism’s characteristics: the cult of tradition, the refusal of modernism, action for action’s sake, the fear of difference, and so on. But, as interesting and pertinent as these characteristics are, Eco himself recognizes that the effort of definition seems ultimately to end in frustration because its object continues to escape. For example, **after having said that fascism is contrary to modernism, it must be recognized that historic fascism played a role in the modernization of society in both Italy and Germany. In the absence, then, of a satisfactory and comprehensive definition,** **we run the risk of defining fascism as everything that disgusts us, and of** identifying fascism**, simply, as the party of imbecility and violence:** as **the party of** evil**.** And this, naturally, **doesn’t work, it** doesn’t define anything**.** The problem is **that to which we are referring by using this word fascism** which is imprecise and historically far too dated, **is an extremely vast field of forms of life, behaviors, ideologies and prejudices that have, in the last analysis, a single element in common: the obsession with definition. The obsession to define is**, in the last analysis, **the characteristic common to the field of phenomena that we define as fascism. This is why this object is so difficult to define. Fascism, in its maximum conceptual extension** (encompassing nationalism and religious fundamentalism, political authoritarianism, sexual aggression and so on) **can be brought back to a fundamental obsession: the obsession with identity, the obsession with belonging, with origin, with recognizability. This obsession has grown, extended itself, exploded over the course of our century, precisely because our century is a century of deterritorialization, of cultural contamination and de-identification. The pressure that seems to fundamentally guide those behaviors which fall within the ambit of fascism is the pressure to recognize ourselves as identical, identifiable, and therefore belonging to a community** (of language, faith, race**) based upon origin**. **Only origin bears witness to belonging, and as we know, origin is an illusion, a legend, an attribute that is more or less shared, but unfounded. Ethnic identity does not exist any more than linguistic identity. While each of us comes from a history of crossbreeding and contaminations that can neither be attested nor authenticated, there are illusions of ethnic belonging; while each of us speaks our own dialect that can never be fundamentally translatable by another speaker, there are illusions of linguistic comprehension. Living together is premised on these. The more the field of ethnic identifiability, of comprehensibility, of origin, are perturbed, the more acute becomes the need to identify, to the point of obsession**.

### Royal Activism

#### Mobilizing activism through representative democracy is complicit with the tactics of governmentality which totalize resistance into the narrow purviews of civic engagement and institutional politics. This saps radicality and gives rise to popular fascism; activism must overthrow demands for representation through a nomadic tactic of formlessness resistance that refuses to yield to clear political motives.

Marcelo Svirsky, 2010

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Rather than problematising the political, this **royal understanding of activism uses its ‘metric power’ to axiomatise politics, while simultaneously repressing activist experiences that refuse simply to align with ‘the given’ of formal politics.** **An example** of this can be seen in **the hostility of western states towards** organisations such as ‘**Wikileaks’** **or the ‘Animal rights movement’**, **each of which are immersed in creative acts of citizenship that actualise ruptures. Such new** scenes and acts are constantly at risk of being appropriated by this royal science of politics, which imposes upon them a model that channels civic participation according to established rules and concepts. Activisms that seek only to guarantee the workings of representative democracy are essentially slave activisms; they dwell in safety and their impact and potential is expected to be absorbed without drawing the system into new structures of resonance. The assumption that ‘mass participation is the lifeblood of representative democracy’ not only imposes a particular model of the political, it also reinforces a pejorative way to conceive activism**. By positing representative democracy** (or any other regime) **as the reified model of political process, theory necessarily idealises certain forms of involvement over others.** For example, classical participatory theory is often blind to **[unable to comprehend]** the creative significance of the **activist energies being unfolded in such events as critical teaching in schools, revolutionary philosophical writing, the deconstructive effect of a critical assemblage that confronts patriarchal power, or of civic homosexuality which disrupts heterosexism.** In fact, **the assumptions underlying ‘representative’ participation are troublesome** for at least two reasons. **Firstly, participation in the formal political process of ‘representative democracy’ does not in itself necessarily implicate a critical attitude or action, seeking a less repressive and more creative life**. To evidence this, **it is enough to keep in mind some fearful recent examples of mass political support for ‘representative’ state violence**, as occurred last May when thousands of Israelis marched in Tel Aviv and the streets of Jerusalem to back the killing by the Israeli Defence Forces of nine activists from the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief, as they boarded the Mavi Marmara ship sailing to Gaza as part of a humanitarian flotilla. **Similarly**, we might remain mindful of other, no less electrifying, **cases of popular support for wars and genocides in South America, Asia, Eastern Europe and Africa, or of events such as the Holocaust. In these instances, mass participation more accurately falls within the Reichian analysis of a popular ‘desire for fascism’**–which lies worlds away from a participatory liberalism that idealises the commitment of the public to activist citizenship (see Isin 2009) and to the tolerant ‘good life’ that western democracy claims to represent. **Secondly, passivity is not necessarily a sign of political anaemia, but may be a cultural expression that requires local explanation. Here, research at times confuses the visible with the political: absence of visible mass participation might be a sign of unconscious and pre-conscious compliance with ongoing forms of oppression, and can impact more energetically on the perpetuation of a regime than can tangible acts of the body – these modes of active abandonment produce the reign of daily microfascisms. After Deleuze and Guattari, political activism may be approached** in a fundamentally different way: **without an image, without a form**. As Deleuze and Guattari make clear, **the interaction between royal and nomad science produces a ‘constantly shifting borderline’, meaning that there is always some element that escapes containment by the ‘iron collars’ of representation** (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 367; see also Deleuze 1994). This occurs when the plane of consistency is passionately thrown against the plane of organisation, **when a nomad element inserts itself in political struggles in which, for instance, the boundaries of citizenship are challenged and reopened** (as occurred in the struggle associated with the sans-papiers movement, see Isin 2009), **or barriers of ethnic segregation are challenged by new forms of interculturalism** (as occurs with bilingual forms of education). **It is through these ‘smallest deviations’ that smooth types of political activity dwell within the striated forms of state politics** (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 371). **Deleuze’s and Deleuze and Guattari’s political philosophies have created some of the conceptual tools which may be put to innovative use in activism that seeks to break with repressive traditions. Their** **alien relation** to the standards set by the royal science of politics (see Patton 2000) – an alienation laid out in the philosophical resources they draw on, in the issues and concepts that characterise their work and, principally, in the incessant movement of their thought – **points towards a richer philosophical weaponry with which to confront and possibly overcome political inhibitions, in both knowledge and practice.**

### The University

#### The hedging of positive affective investment in neoliberal academia enables the continuation of control and exclusion drawn along epistemological lines. Analysis of the university must begin with a negativity and occupation of contradiction which desires to lay its racialized and colonial foundations to ruin through an internal subversion based in intellectual theft, abuse, and destruction.

Akwugo Emejulu, 2017

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Disciplining the disciplines Anyone working in higher education over the last 15 years has experienced the [destructive changes to the university environment](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/nov/16/universities-accused-of-importing-sports-direct-model-for-lecturers-pay) that Stefan Collini describes in [Speaking of Universities](http://www.versobooks.com/books/2403-speaking-of-universities?discount_code=Collini). Universities have been transformed from semi-autonomous and self-governing institutions of scholarly pursuit to commodified and marketised entities. Today, universities are forced into competitive relations with each other and obliged to charge students exorbitant fees – a deliberate policy of central government control that harnesses the threat of revolt by debt-ridden students. Further, the introduction of increased fees effectively removed universities from social welfare provision and delinked participation in higher education from conceptions of British social citizenship and solidarity. **To participate in higher education** in Britain **is no longer a social good but a privatised risk – although participation in higher education continues to be a mostly elite activity despite the expansion of universities from the 1960s. We should understand the introduction of student fees as part of the** [**permanent austerity agenda of advanced welfare states since the 1990s**](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13501769880000011)**.** **A policy of precarity has transformed the working conditions of higher education workers.** Thanks to predatory league tables published by, for example, QS World University Rankings, and the regulatory governance of scholarship through the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the coming Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and the ephemeral impact agenda, **scholarly work must now fulfil an arbitrary ranking system of ‘world leading’ and ‘excellence’ for the sake of increased funding from central government.** **These regulatory instruments are deeply affective, generating anxiety and fear for academics. Both university management and central government leverage this stress to discipline and control individual academics and our knowledge production in** [**deeply gendered and racialised**](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ECU_Academic-flight-from-UK-education_RR.pdf) **ways: white women, people of colour and women of colour in particular are more likely to placed on teaching-only contracts or languish on insecure contracts which curtail their futures as academics.** Thus to speak of universities necessitates speaking of and making visible the material conditions of universities. We cannot speak of universities without also speaking of the outsourcing of cleaning and catering services and the struggle of mostly Black, minority and migrant workers to be paid a living wage and resist the imposition of zero-hour contracts. We cannot speak of universities without also seeing how the experiments in precarity with the lowest paid and most vulnerable workers inevitably spread to other workers who perhaps thought they were protected from the logic of capitalist accumulation by their commitment to the university as a ‘protected home of free inquiry’. As we have seen across the country, temporary, low-paid contracts have been introduced to PhD students and early career researchers to enable higher status academics like myself to participate in the disciplining devices of the REF, TEF and research impact. The University is not innocent Speaking of universities requires us to understand that universities are neither innocent nor neutral. It is part of the epistemic power that universities wield to construct them as essentially passive actors in struggles to regulate and decide what knowledge is and whose knowledge counts. Take for example the fact that Black and Minority Ethnic young people are more likely to leave school with better qualifications than their white counterparts but are less likely to gain admission to Britain’s top universities. Once at university, students of colour are more likely to experience an [attainment gap](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/bme_summit_final_report.pdf): they are less likely to get top marks in their studies in terms of graduating with first or upper second class honour degrees. After graduation, as they enter the labour market, graduates of colour are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, in comparison to their white peers. For those people of colour who manage to navigate this perilous journey through higher education to become academics, they are confronted again by institutionalised gender and racial discrimination in universities. [According to the Equality Challenge Unit figures from 2016](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/equality-in-higher-education-statistical-report-2016/), there are only 345 women of colour professors: to analyse this category further, there are only 30 Black British, 10 British Pakistani and 5 British Bangladeshi women professors (the largest groups of women of colour professors are British Indian women, 80, and British Chinese, 75). In comparison, there are 3,895 white female and 12,455 white male professors. Thus, to speak of universities is to recognise them as spaces of exclusion and discrimination which hide their epistemic violence behind a rhetoric of meritocracy, collegiality and the ‘free exchange of ideas’. [As I have previously argued](http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3044-another-university-is-possible), decolonisation struggles attempt to break open the stranglehold that the canon has on ‘legitimate knowledge’. When colleagues at University College London asked [‘Why is My Curriculum White?’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dscx4h2l-Pk) and [‘Why Isn’t My Professor Black?’](http://www.dtmh.ucl.ac.uk/isnt-professor-black-reflection/), they were attempting to recast the university to make visible its material and discursive interests. There have always been limits to who can know, what is allowed to be known and what is deemed knowable in universities, long before the REF and TEF: from the epistemological violence of the closure of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham to the [backlash against decolonisation at SOAS](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/01/08/university-students-demand-philosophers-including-plato-kant/) and [Oxford](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/jan/28/cecil-rhodes-statue-will-not-be-removed--oxford-university), and the historical and contemporary exclusion of people based on their race, class, gender, sexuality, disability and legal status. These attempts to control knowledge and knowing are the hallmarks of the elite institutional project of the university: selection, suppression and exclusion. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten go further still: given the epistemic violence of universities and their neoliberal logic, ‘the only possible relationship to the university today is a criminal one’. They highlight the fundamental contradiction of Black scholars in and of universities and argue for a scholarly relationship of theft: ‘It cannot be denied that the university is a place of refuge, and it cannot be accepted that the university is a place of enlightenment. In the face of these conditions one can only sneak into the university and steal what one can. To abuse its hospitality, to spite its mission, to join its refugee colony… to be in but not of – this is the path of the subversive intellectual in the modern university’.

### Cognitive Linguistic Labor

#### The constant tapping of cognitive labor, such as the liberal expression of open speech, is the basis for a psychologically distraught culture which lacks empathy. Modernity has fragmented humanities’ sensibility through the twin forces of rendering linguistics as a merely functional, linear, tool devoid of affective investment and the removal of authentic human interaction through mandated productivity.

* Time is stolen away because it is abstract rather than material labor – forces continued labor and stimulation

Franco Bifo Berardi, 2015

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In her 1975 book The Show and Tell Machine, Rose Goldsen describes a future generation of humans transformed by the mediascape – then mainly characterized by TV and advertising – and foresees a telling mutation in the field of psychology and language: ‘We are breeding a generation of human beings whose primal impressions come from a machine – it’s the first time in history this has occurred.’2 Television and, more recently, the digital revolution have ushered in formidable transformations to the human mental environment. The fact that human beings learn more vocabulary from a machine than from their mothers is undeniably leading to the development of a new kind of sensibility. The new forms of mass psychopathology of our time cannot be investigated without due consideration of the effects of this new environment, in particular the new process of language learning. Two main developments demand consideration: the first is the dissociation of language learning from the bodily affective experience; the second is the virtualization of the experience of the other. This first aspect of the transformation is particularly interesting. According to Luisa Muraro, an Italian writer whose work is mainly dedicated to elaborating a feminist philosophical perspective, access to language is fundamentally linked to the affective relation between the body of the learner and the body of the mother. **The** deep**, emotional grasp** on the double articulation **of language**, on the relation between signifier and signified in the linguistic sign, **is something that is rooted in the trusted reliance on the affective body of the mother. When this process is reduced to an effect of the exchange between machine and human brain, the process of language learning is detached from the emotional effect of the bodily contact**, and the relation between signifier and signified becomes merely operational. **Words are not affectively grasping meaning, meaning is not rooted in the depth of the body, and communication is not perceived as affective relation between bodies, but as a working exchange of operating instructions.** We can expect that **psychic suffering will** **soon follow**. Beyond this, a second transformation has happened in the psychological sphere: **young people spend their early formative years in a constant relationship with infomachines, while experiencing less and less face-to-face bodily contact with others**. Children are increasingly removed from the bodily presence of other children and subjected to a virtual form of communication with distant entities whose body does not belong to a sensitive and sensible space. **Sensibility itself is at stake**, here. Sensibility is **the faculty that allows human beings to understand those signs that are not verbalized, and that cannot be reduced to words. Sensibility (and sensitivity, which is the physical, erotic face of the non-verbal ability to understand and to exchange meaning) is the interpersonal film that makes possible the empathic perception of the other. Empathy** (the ability to feel the pleasure and the sorrow of the other as part of our pleasure and sorrow) **is** not a natural emotion, but rather **a psychological condition that is cultivated and refined, and which, in the absence of such cultivation, can wither and disappear.** There is much evidence to suggest that this mutation in the experience of communication is producing a pathology in the sphere of empathy (an autistic trend) and in the sphere of sensibility (desensitization to the presence of the other). And **this mutation of the psychic and linguistic interaction may also be at the root of the contemporary precariousness of life**. Precariousness is not only the condition of labour in the age of global deterritorialization, but it is also **the fragmentation of the social body, the fracturing of self-perception and of the perception of time. Time no longer belongs to the individual, and the capitalist no longer buys the personal life of individuals; instead, people are erased from the space of work, and time is turned into a vortex of depersonalized, fragmentary substance that can be acquired by the capitalist and recombined by the network-machine. Cognitive labour in particular – the work of information and imagination – is particularly susceptible to the precariousness rule. Being immaterial and purely informational, this kind of work does not need to be localized in a physical space. It can be transferred, fragmented, fractured and finally recombined in the abstract space of the internet.**

### Jouralistic Hyperreality

#### The question of accessibility to journalism is entirely irrelevant – whether suppressed or free the fact remains that it is devoid of any value. Their reckless demand to continue the flow of information, be it print or digital, is futile as it is all a figment of a virtual world with no basis in reality. This only furthers the oversaturation in our current spheres of media that make critique meaningless as it is no longer a question of content but rather a question of how information is communicated.

D. Joyce-Ahearne, 2014

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Print, as a medium for news, is dead. News never waited for anyone but before the Internet we often had to wait for it. But news finds us now, seeking out our online presence. To use print as a means of disseminating news today is a postmodern statement of futility. Online offers endless space and endless time. One would think that this is a development without downsides for media outlets, but questions have to be asked about how we use the Internet to inform ourselves and others. News online is accessed through one of two ways; we can still seek it out on specific media sites in the same we way we used to buy the paper but now it also comes to us, through our news feeds on Facebook and Twitter. That news can come to us is a symptom of the mass migration of the digital age. Like the news, we too have, in our millions, moved online. There are people alive today using Facebook who have no memory of the world being a place without it. Online is as normal, if not as real, as real life to people who don’t remember a time before social media, and also for many who can. To use the vocabulary of the French theorist Jean Baudrillard, we now have a hyperreality alongside the real world, one that we engage with every time we log in and one that engages with us through our newsfeed. What then are the consequences of a hyperrealty in which individuals inform themselves and gather their news about the real world? In what ways do our online selves interact differently with online news than we interact with news in the real world? Another of Baudrillard’s ideas is “the loss of the real”, the increasing influence of virtual reality in our lives and the blurring of the distinction between the real and the imagined, reality and illusion. Social media is a frighteningly clear example of both hyperreality and the loss of the real. Worrying enough as this is as a social trend, when it becomes the means by which we inform ourselves for the real world, the fabric of that real world comes into question. **The building blocks of hyperreality for Baudrillard are signs** that “mask the absence of a basic reality.” These are signs **that disguise the fact that they don’t actually correspond to anything real.** Peter Barry gives the example of idealised images of masculinity and femininity that pervade society. These are signs for which no original exists but which people strive to imitate. Thus the sign, the imagined, becomes the reality and the real is forgotten. **For the individual, their Facebook profile is a means by which they can construct themselves as they wish. They can commit acts which often have no basis in reality. They can become friends, join movements and like things, previously held to be events that all presupposed coming into contact with something real, something tangibl**e. We’ve reached a period where social media is an established institution, part of everyday life, what Baudrillard might call the “precession of simulacra”. On an individual basis, this means Facebook precedes us; it’s waiting for us to sign up with an outline of a profile picture that we substitute for a picture of ourselves. **People also access news online. A danger arises when the media is doing the same as the individual, when media outlets are themselves masking an absence of reality online. If this is how people are getting their news, then there is a serious disconnect with the real world.** News, the news we choose to engage with online, just becomes another facet of an online reality that exists without any grounding in either the world of the individual or of the events in which they exist. What people like and share online is part of their online persona and by choosing what they want to be seen to know, informing oneself can become synonymous with accessorising one’s online character. CollegeTimes.com is an example of a system of signs masking absences passing as media, a “simulacrum”. The “reality” of CollegeTimes.com is not that of an underlying reality, but of other signs. By disseminating ideas like “Most Attractive Personality Traits in A Woman” and “The 29 Most Annoying Things Girlfriends Ask” online, they promote a narrative with no basis in reality but which is designed to be shared and liked by people online. There is no such thing as the “most attractive woman” or the “most annoying girlfriend” but in an online world such ideas have weight when no-one’s idea of themselves has much grounding in real life either, when their online personas are designed to hide what they perceive to be their real life absences. People don’t want to be the “most annoying girlfriend” but because no-one can ever really say what makes a girlfriend the most annoying, the best thing is to subscribe to an online definition of what that is, and apply it to oneself, or rather to oneself online. Though the Internet is not the first spectre to incite questions over mass media it is a particular issue that has no real precedent. It poses issues that have never before encountered by those engaging with media and those in charge of it. Obviously responsible journalism, as ever, stays the same. Report the facts and don’t make things up, but in an environment of simulation, the means of communication are just as important as what’s being reported. When the individuals and the media are both operating on assumptions on what the other wants their reality to be, then reporting the facts becomes more complicated. Baudrillard’s famous claim that the Gulf War never happened highlights the layers of complications that arise from journalism in the digital age. Though the first Gulf War undeniably took place, the framing and reporting by media meant that the only consciousness that we, the masses, had of the war is what they chose to show us. Subsequently, we were bombarded with what they wanted us to see.

## Alternatives

### Imaginary Ruins [1m]

#### The role of the ballot is to vote for the best methodology to cultivate subjectivity.

#### Vote negative to play a game of imaginary ruins – a communist critique which incites negativity through an imagined destruction of the world around you. In postmodernity, where direct action seems nearly impossible, negative imaginaries become a praxis for resistance, creating a refusal to oblige an economy of positive affect. This strategy engages in a personal politics while at the same time enabling a “lying in wait” in the time we “do nothing” to ferment our hatred, anger, and depression into new horizons for subjectivity.

John Cunningham, 2015

“Negation At A Standstill” published in “Bad Feelings” a collection produced by Arts Against Cuts and published by Book Works as part of Common Objectives, guest edited by Nina Power; edited and designed by Louis Hartnoll, Lucy Killoran, Robyn Minogue, and Sophie Carapetian.

**Imaginary Ruins** There’s a game that can be played when walking through the city. Any zone of the contemporary capitalist metropolis will do but it’s best played in one of the centres of accumulation, say London, than one of the less developed sectors. This rule is not absolute since decaying post-industrial cities also have their attractions. The game involves an imaginary testing of the city’s buildings and neighbourhoods for their worthiness for destruction. This testing asks the question whether or not these office blocks, shops, apartment blocks, and other excrescent forms of the built environment deserve to exist in some imaginary post-capitalist future. And needless to say, whether the forms of life and social relations the contemporary metropolis helps to engender are not also worthy of a similar negation. It’s a game that can be played singularly or in groups, and does not so much open up the metropolis as reduce it to a series of potentially empty spaces. Most of the time this game is disturbingly easy, with the city throwing up future ruins at every street corner. That squat, concrete block of a police station needs to be reduced to rubble if only for the misery encrusted in its walls. The many-storied, uninhabitable financial office block deserves ruination despite the odd attraction of its well-tended atrium as a place of rest. Other husks of brick, glass, concrete, and dead labour are much less straightforward. A shopping mall, enlightened glass arcade of circulating bodies and commodities, might also serve other purposes, glass surfaces and transparencies being capable of reflecting more than the relations of exchange. The utopian potential of glass architecture, the revolutionary virtues of transparency and openness, might be realised in the midst of a wider negation of capitalism. Utopian and revolutionary thinkers such as Charles Fourier and Walter Benjamin thought that such architecture promised a break with the opacity and interior poverty of private life. Perhaps, the game suggests, this break could be made actual if the glass cages of the present were put to use by new collectivities and subjects.1 It’s a shame that this game is little more than a way of critically passing the time walking through the shadows cast upon us by the metropolis, its structures, and apparatuses. Walking around transcribing the potentially empty spaces of the metropolis, enjoyable as it is, also traces the lack of agency that might make such a negation real. And such a lack ironically makes negation more necessary than ever. Negation and negativity as such, that inchoate combination of affects and passions such as boredom, hatred, depression, is more like a knot pulled ever tighter by this seeming lack of anti-capitalist negation in the present. Despite the rigours of a long drawn out socio-economic and environmental crisis, the actuality of the negation of capitalism seems as far away as ever. However, even if critique must operate in this suspended space it can still register the subjective and political brokenness that accumulates through the exertions of capitalist value production. The activity of the communist critic can hopefully be negative enough to find some purchase upon the contradictions of capitalism that might be valid tender in the marketplaces of negation. The stalling of negation might in itself provide the possibility of rethinking it.